

# Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Pair arrested: Two Canton men are arrested after purse snatching incidents./A2**

## OPINION

**Payback: We suggest Farmington Public Schools officials should return \$9.5 million to taxpayers./A12**

## SPORTS

**College scene: North Farmington graduate Carrie May is leading a late-season charge by the Oakland Community College women's basketball team toward the conference playoffs./C1**

## AT HOME

**Designed with care: A Troy company, Caring Solutions, helps disabled people keep their independence by developing custom designs for home and office./D6**

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Film: Gordon Michaels, a graduate, is a lot like the lead character he plays in the film "Unbeatable Harold"—determined to bring the story to the big screen./E1**

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## Popular nightclub changes ownership

**BY RICHARD PEARL**  
STAFF WRITER

The pending sale of the Cadillac Cafe, 30565 Grand River, moved a step forward Monday night when the Farmington Hills City Council approved transfer of its Class C liquor license with dance permit to the potential new owners.

The unanimous vote cleared the way for MAV of Michigan, Inc., a family business which owns and operates The Sideline sports bar, 36000 Seven Mile Road in Livonia, to seek state approval of the transfer.

The Cadillac, in business seven years, is owned and operated by Ronald and Keith Wadde.

MAV co-owners Violet Kuretsch and Sandra Beslach vowed to be very careful about selling alcohol to minors.

The Sideline, opened in 1993, paid a \$300 fine for one such violation, in March, 1995.

Beschlach told the council that doormen will check identification. Also, employees are told "if a person looks younger than 30, card them again. If they put up a fuss, get a manager."

Councilman Terry Severg urged the women to talk with Hills Police Chief William Dwyer regarding fake IDs.

MAV plans to offer the varied Sideline food menu.

## High-tech trek



Learning together: Harrison High student J.R. Mankoff, left; and mechanical engineer Al DeBoni work on the Robo Hawk robot, which will be entered in the Great Lakes region of the FIRST competition at Eastern Michigan University. This is the second year TRW and Harrison High have worked together on a robotics project.

## Robotics project teams students, TRW engineers

**BY TIM SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

Sometime this week, "Robo Hawk" will roam Harrison High School's cafeteria and come to life.

And when the pulse action robot picks up a ball, lifts it with its "elevator" arms and shoots it through the top of an 8-foot tall metal cylinder, students such as junior Ari Shwyder will be leading the cheers from the sidelines.

"The first time you see the robot move it's like, 'Oh my God,'" said Shwyder. "You're blown away. Something that you worked on for four or five weeks is actually out there running around, doing what you thought it was going to do."

Just as enthused is junior J.R. Mankoff, who spent hours on computer-aided design, CAD, drawing up plans for the robot's elevator arms.

"I love it," Mankoff said. "It's

When: Great Lakes portion of FIRST ... For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology's seventh annual competition, March 19-21 at Eastern Michigan University.

Why: Helps students consider engineering careers by working side-by-side with professionals.

How: Robots must be able to pick up balls and, fighting off opposition robots, drop them through the top of an eight-foot-tall metal cylinder.

How much: \$4,000 entry fee, collected through various fundraisers.

If successful: The national championship is April 2-4 at Walt Disney World.

great, it's something very few kids can experience through high school ... This is an amazing hands-on experience, as well as educational."

The reason for Robo Hawk's unusual practice sessions is to hone

Please see ROBO HAWK, A5

## Fireworks to highlight 25th anniversary fest

**BY RICHARD PEARL**  
STAFF WRITER

An annual fireworks display in Farmington Hills?

That idea was mentioned Monday night as city council members authorized spending up to \$20,000 to defray expenses of Farmington Hills' two-day, 25th anniversary celebration this summer.

Hills businesses will be contacted by the 25th Anniversary Committee to provide sponsorship of various activities and events in the June 26-27 celebration, including a climaxing \$12,000 fireworks display.

Complete ownership of the fireworks display would cost a sponsor \$6,000, with the city underwriting the other half anonymously.

However, if two or more groups would like to sponsor the display, their \$6,000 share will be divided proportionately.

Councilwoman Nancy Bates, co-chairwoman of the anniversary committee, said the fireworks company will provide \$1 million in liability insurance.

Making the anniversary fireworks into an annual event is favored by Councilman Jerry Ellis.

"I remember taking my children to such displays and kids in the community are missing that (family-type function) right now," he said.

Other major activities for which business sponsorship is sought are a \$1,500 petting farm and a \$2,900, three- to four-hour concert by the popular metro Detroit band Teen Angels.

Other expenses such as additional police and bus transportation are yet to be determined, according to Jeff Stewart, co-chairman with Bates.

The big event, themed to recognize

Please see FIREWORKS, A2

## Calling all artists

Farmington Area Arts Commission is accepting nominations for its annual Artist-in-Residence and the Distinguished Service to the Arts honors. The commission considers those in the fields of art, drama, dance, literature and music.

The Artist-in-Resident award recognizes the talent and accomplishments of a person who lives in Farmington or Farmington Hills with a cash award, plaque and reception in their honor.

The Distinguished Service Award honors outstanding service to the community in the creative arts. Group and individuals may receive the award for support, promotion, management or teaching of the arts.

Previous nominations are encouraged to be resubmitted. Nominations must be received by Monday, March 16, and sent to: Farmington Area Arts Commission, Artist-in-Residence Committee, City Manager's Office, 31555 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills 48336.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

**Hail to the principal**

Wooddale Elementary School students went to great lengths to toast their principal, Lusenin Jones, during last week's statewide Principal Recognition Week.

According to Wooddale PTA Vice President Jill O'Hara, students from all classrooms in the Farmington district school assembled quite a flattering hall display to honor Jones.

## Council bans the boards

Teen sport still OK outside downtown business district.

**BY TIM SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

Disappointment jumped to a new height for Farmington area skateboarders with the city council's decision Tuesday night to ban the sport from the downtown business district.

Farmington council members, in adopting a policy that mirrors those in other downtowns such as Birmingham and Royal Oak, primarily cited safety concerns — both for skateboarders and downtown customers.

Their decision followed several pleas from skateboarding teens to let them continue practicing their steam-releasing sport in the curbs-and-ramps-laden Downtown Farmington Center, or to at least create a skateboarding park elsewhere in the vicinity. "The ban takes effect in two weeks. First offenders will be warned, and then face subsequent

Please see SKATEBOARDERS, A6

## Cities move to step up cable deal

**BY RICHARD PEARL**  
STAFF WRITER

Ongoing cable television negotiations between the local regulatory commission and Time Warner got a strong push from the Farmington Hills City Council Monday night.

The council unanimously called for the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission — which represents the Hills, the City of Farmington and Novi — to prepare a formal request for proposal for Time Warner. Farmington City Council passed a similar resolution on Tuesday.

While noting that "neither side wants" to go to the RFP stage, Hills City Attorney John Donohue said, "We need to get down to the table and work out" an end to the negotiations.

A request for proposal, he said, "triggers a timetable" because then the SWOCC has a certain number of days to draft a proposal and the city a spe-

Please see CABLE, A2

## A song for the times



Vocal about it: Carmine Carfagno, assistant Senex aide; and John Clappison join in a sing-a-long offered in the day care program for homebound seniors at William Costick Center. For more on the program, please see page B1.

The display featured student-made projects, including books (such as one titled "What Does the Principal Do All Day?"); paper quilts, with each student filling up a square with their thoughts about Jones; and perhaps 30 cardboard cut-outs, each with mimeographed copies of a Jones head photo on top.

"Each class did something collectively and put it out in the hallway," O'Hara said.

## His honor honored

Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi was honored by being one of the first appointees to the new Michigan Supreme Court Local Intergovernmental Advisory Council. Vagnozzi will serve a two-year term. The advisory council was set up to foster an improved relationship between trial courts and local government. The council meets four times a year.

